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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FUNCTIONAL CONFLICT, SELF-DISCLOSURE, SOLIDARITY AND SATISFACTION WITHIN MARITAL DYADS

By

Dean Richard Pioli

B.A., San Francisco State University, 1981

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

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1984

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August 13, 1984
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A Study to Determine the Relationship Between Functional Conflict, Self-Disclosure, Solidarity and Satisfaction Within Marital Dyads (79 pp.)

Advisor: Wesley N. Shellen Wesley N. Shellen

This study sought to define and measure the differences between functional and dysfunctional conflicts within marital dyads. In addition, it was hypothesized that functional conflict within dyads was strongly related to self-disclosure, interpersonal solidarity, and marital satisfaction.

The Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale (FDCAS) was developed in this study to measure functional and dysfunctional conflict. The FDCAS was administered to 58 subjects and subjected to an item analysis and a Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha test for reliability. The FDCAS proved to be an intitially reliable instrument.

Subjects also responded to three other self-report measures: (1) the Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS), (2) the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) and, (3) the Individualized Trust Scale (ITS). The five subscale scores of the RSDS and the total scores from the DAS and ITS were correlated with the total score of the revised version of the FDCAS. The result of the analysis confirmed that solidarity and satisfaction were significantly related to functional conflict between married individuals. However, all five dimensions of self-disclosure failed to significantly correlate with functional conflict as measured. The extremely weak relationship between self-disclosure and functional conflict was explained in the following ways: (1) instrument failure to measure the relevant variables; (2) skewed demographics of subject population; (3) insufficient relationship between relevant variables.

Further testing of the FDCAS is recommended to further substantiate its reliability. The FDCAS intercorrelates significantly with the DAS and ITS which enhance the FDCAS's predicative validity. Because the FDCAS is believed to be the first known instrument to measure conflict styles of marital dyads, it is believed to be a significant contribution to the communication field.

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I wish to extend my gratitude to the following people for their help and generosity.

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My deepest appreciation goes to my fiancé Amy who tolerated my anxiety and frustration yet never lost faith in my ability. You suffered the most yet complained the least.

Felix and Rita Pioli, my parents, gave me strength by reminding me of the power of our family love. It was they who instilled in me the ability to persevere even in the most demanding situations. Their lesson is embedded in my heart.

A very special thanks to my friends Winifred and Eric Norris who fed and sheltered me when the money ran out and times were the hardest. In the final days of this study their affection for me and the incomparable beauty of Montana provided me with the peace of mind to endure the daily callenges.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the following question: to what degree do marital dyads who share appropriate, mutual high levels of self-disclosure, experience a markedly lower frequency of dysfunctional conflict as opposed to dyads who do not share high levels of self-disclosure? The purpose, within the confines of this study, is to construct an argument to suggest the efficacy of self-disclosure in reducing dysfunctional conflict episodes. This chapter contains a review of relevant research and theory which (a) offers a working definition of conflict, (b) briefly reviews some potential misconceptions about conflict, (c) defines "dysfunctional" and "functional" conflict, (d) offers a definition of self-disclosure and a selective review of elements inherent in self-disclosure which postulates the relevance of self-disclosure to marital satisfaction, (e) suggests some guidelines by which to distinguish "appropriate" self-disclosure and, (f) discusses implications self-disclosure may have on diminishing the frequency of destructive conflict episodes within committed relational dyads.

Conflict Defined

A communication perspective of conflict must of necessity involve the notion of transaction between dyadic partners (Pearce and Sharp 1973, 1974). A useful definition of conflict from a communication perspective which incorporates the element of transaction has been offered by Frost and Wilmot: "conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties, who perceive uncompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals. They are in a position of opposition in conjunction with cooperation" (1978, p. 9).

Some clarification of the key elements of the above conflict definition appear to be in order. To begin, implicit in the notion of "expressed struggle" is the judgment that both parties must be cognitively aware a conflict situation exists. In addition, the conflict, to qualify as conflict, must be manifest in conflict related behaviors which are distinguishable from other non-conflict behaviors by the participants in the conflict. Thus a conflict episode, to qualify as such, must be an observable phenomenon to both actors within a dyad.

The identification of "interdependence" between parties in a conflict situation is an important distinction from earlier definitions of conflict. Interdependence or

mutual dependence between relational partners inhibits the range of potential alternatives to conflict to the members of a dyad. Within an interdependent dyad the option to disregard relational needs is rarely, if ever, considered acceptable to the participants who engage in functional conflict episodes.

On another more pragmatic basis, the minimum number of people necessary to engage in a conflict episode is two. Thus, without one's relational partner, interpersonal conflict cannot exist as defined.

Perceptions of "incompatible goals" suggest relational partners in a conflict situation are striving to attain their individual goals (a cognitive "end state") which they believe to be in contrast to, or incompatible with the perceived goals of their partner. Because each individual within a dyad acknowledges significant dependence upon the other, the issue of incompatibility of goals becomes a crucial concern to the dyad. Simply stated, if the members of a dyad believe their individual goals compliment the perceived goals of their partner, there is rarely a basis for conflict. Perceived incompatibility of goals on the other hand, can and frequently does threaten the temporal stability of a relationship.

Each member of a dyad, based on perceptions of goal incompatibility, further perceives the relational partner to be attempting to or likely to interfere or

sabotage the other individual's goals. Thus perceived interference from one member may be construed as "threatening" the goal attainment of the other member of a dyad.

The final portion of Frost and Wilmot's definition of conflict reads "...opposition in conjunction with cooperation." Stated simply, the relational partners have agreed to disagree. Both individuals within the dyad have coordinated their behaviors to manifest their opposition to the issues or goals of their partner. Again, a conflict episode depends on the "coordinated" explicit conflict behaviors of both partners to qualify as a conflict situation. In a sense, this "coordination" is synonomous with the communicative prerequisite of transaction.

Misconceptions about Conflict

Earlier communication scholars frequently assumed that conflict was negative and undesirable (Simons 1972). Although a few more recent texts suggest that conflict has positive applications in certain circumstances, (Myers & Myers 1980; DeVito 1982; Verderber & Verderber 1983; Adler, Rosenfeld & Towne 1983 as examples), notions of conflict as antiproductive persist. Some of the most common misconceptions about conflict were outlined by Frost & Wilmot in their book Interpersonal Conflict (1978). They include: (1) conflict is abnormal or "pathological." In

this vein of thinking people who demonstrate conflict behavior are "frustrated", "anxious," "blocked," or "neurotic"; (2) conflict is abnormal--harmony is normal. With the exception of Simons (1972), Frost and Wilmot were unable to discover an author who considered conflicts normal and harmony an aberration; (3) conflicts and disagreements are the same phenomena. The term "communication breakdown" is frequently used by authors to describe conflict situations (Simons 1972). The terms "disagreements" and "conflicts" are often used interchangeably; (4) conflict is best reduced or avoided. As an example Filley (1975) suggests that problem-solving is the "opposite" of conflict and that the result of conflict is "loss." Weiss (1974) advises managers to "minimize" conflict and "rechannel the energy" a conflict situation produces.

The major trend in the literature has been clear--conflict is a negative phenomenon--best avoided or resolved because of its abnormal or disruptive qualities.

Specifically, conflict is generally viewed as destructive by many writers. Two first-order (common sense) beliefs contribute to the lack of distinction concerning conflict. First, conflict is generally undesirable for many people. In conflict situations reason cannot always be expected to prevail. Anger or heightened emotions are frightening to (most) humans. The second common sense

notion which contributes to confusion about conflict is that conflict should be avoided or resolved as expeditiously as possible because it is "negative," non-productive or counterproductive to establishing or maintaining satisfying relationships between people. In short, many relationally attributes associated with some types of conflict have been previously generalized into notions about all conflict without regard for a dialectic concept of productive or functional conflict as well as unproductive or dysfunctional conflict.

Dysfunctional Conflict

The concept of dysfunctional conflict needs some clarification. Destructive conflicts have one or more of the following attributes: (1) both parties feel they have "lost" and feel dissatisfied as a result of their conflict, (2) partners seem intent on escalatory conflict tactics, (3) one or both of the partners place increasing reliance on overt power manipulation, deception, coercion, and threats, (4) intimates become increasingly wary of their partner's attacks and adopt increasingly defensive behavioral patterns, and (5) frustration over perceived incompatibility of relational and personal goals becomes internalized. An emerging goal of the relationship is to "get the other partner" (Jourard 1964; Bach & Wyden 1968; Frost & Wilmot May 1972; 1978; Wehr 1979). If a given couple maintains a

competitive conflict "style" then the type of conflict they are engaging in is likely to be destructive. Escalation and entrenchment are the most likely outcomes of competitive conflict tactics. Interactions between the combatants are guarded. Any sign of vulnerability on the part of one person, will be capitalized and perceived as a sign of weakness by the other--and potentially spur on another assault. Misunderstandings become the relational norm. Dissatisfaction with the relationship will continue to be fostered by both parties. An important point needs to be noted; the "blame" for the unsatisfactory conflict lies not in either of the individuals--it resides in the competitive conflict style relational partners utilize during the course of their conflict.

Functional Conflict

Whenever two people attempt to coordinate their needs, desires, activities and relational perceptions, the advent of conflict can be expected sooner or later (Simons 1972). No matter what philosophy of communication one adheres to, the relative nature of perception and the difficulty in coordinating meaning between people will create difficulties within relationships.

A simple working definition of functional conflict is that it is goal oriented with mutually respected relational rules (Watzlawick 1976) that govern the

interactions of the dyad. A binding agreement to abide by rules that outline the method of how the couple "does" conflict is the relational norm. A cognitive experience of interdependence is higher as a result of the collaboration necessary to maintain the "fair fight" rule (Bach & Goldberg 1974). The correlation between a high mutual awareness of interdependence is essential to the concept of constructive conflict. In a cyclical fashion, a high sense of interdependence reinforces the need to collaborate; successful collaboration bolsters the dyad's sense of interdependence (Apfelbaum 1974; Frost & Wilmot 1978).

Indeed, collaborative conflict techniques can and often do enhance the quality and satisfaction of a relationship (Bach & Wyden 1968; Stewart 1973; Guerney 1977; Frost & Wilmot 1978; Wheeless 1978; Wehr 1979), as well as sense of solidarity and trust. It has been demonstrated that people tend to respond positively and more cooperatively towards those who demonstrate collaborative rather than competitive behavior (Apfelbaum 1974). The primary goal of the interactants is harmonious maintenance of the relationship. Levels of trust would be expected to be higher (Apfelbaum 1974) than between couples who engage in dysfunctional conflict practices.

Collaboration is what distinguishes functional from dysfunctional conflict. Individuals within dyads

collaborate in their conflicts to actively define the issues over which they disagree. They further agree to manage those issues with the overriding, explicit relational goal of mutual satisfaction with the conflict outcome. Again, dyadic partners emphasize their interdependence over their individual differences. Clarity of issues and heightened awareness of interdependence act in a prophylactic fashion to counter the competitive atmosphere which permeates dysfunctional conflict episodes (Pioli 1983).

Some practitioners in the relational enhancement field have already emphasized collaborative conflict techniques for a number of years with encouraging results (see, for example Bach and Wyden 1968; Guerney 1977; Hof and Miller 1981).

Self-Disclosure

As early as 1959, Jourard suggested that self-disclosure was a "symptom of personality health,"

> ...It is not until I <u>am</u> my real self and I <u>act</u> my real self that my real self is in a position to grow. One's self grows from the consequence of being. People's selves stop growing when they repress them. This growth-arrest in the self is what helps to account for the surprising paradox of finding an infant inside the skin or someone who is playing the role of an adult (p. 501).

By 1966, in the first known book based on self-disclosure and mental health, Jourard postulated his concept of the "dyadic effect" (1964). Inherent in his

theory was his proposal that incremental self-disclosing between partners in an intimate relationship becomes a cyclical pattern of behavior between them leading to mutually higher levels of mental health and relational satisfaction.

The sixties saw an outpouring of theoretical, and research based material. Paul C. Cozby assembled an impressive literature review of most of the published works on self-disclosure up to that time--some 102 articles (Cozby 1973). From only eight published articles in the fifties to more than 500 published to date, the interest in self-disclosure shows few signs of receding soon (Cline 1982). Not surprisingly, little general agreement is expressed on the positive (or negative) effects of self-disclosure (Gilbert and Whiteneck 1976; Wheeless and Grotz 1976).

Doubtless, the most prolific author on the subject, Jourard writes, "Now this talking about oneself to another person is what I call self-disclosure" (p. 410, 1971). Wenburg and Wilmot state that "When two or more individuals are open and honest with each other, they are engaging in interpersonal self-disclosure" (p. 219, 1973).

A definition consistent with the basis of its strong transactional perspective in communication is offered by Pearce and Sharp: "Self-disclosure occurs when one person voluntarily tells another person things about himself

(herself) which the other is unlikely to know or to discover from other sources" (Pearce and Sharp 1973, p. 414).

We know in the initial stages of a relationship there is a strong correlation between "liking" and mutual self-disclosure (Jourard 1959, 1964; Cozby 1973; Pearce, Sharp, Wright and Slama 1974; Cline 1982). In addition, incremental advances in the degree of self-disclosure within a relationship nurtures and allows trust to form and deepen (Jourard 1964; Luft 1969; Hof and Miller 1981; Carnes 1981; Cline 1982) within the relationship. The chances of a couple forming an ongoing, intimate relationship in our culture without self-disclosure (and liking or affection) would be extremely low.

Implicit in dyadic behavior is the need for intimates to be able to predict (and act on) the needs, valences, or predispositions of their partners. High levels of relational ambiguity have been linked with a variety of dysfunctional behavioral patterns. The need for self-disclosure as a means to avoid high levels of relational ambiguity seems to be already well supported if only for the maintenance of mental health (Jourard, 1959, 1964, 1971; Mack & Snyder 1973; Chelune & Figueroa, 1981).

A growing, shared confidence would seem to indicate a deepening respect and mutual concern as the relationship progresses through its "relational stages" (Knapp 1978). We know that self-disclosure is reciprocal by nature (Jourard

1959, Maslow 1962, 1964; Cozby 1973; Apfelbaum 1974; Wilmot 1979) and marked by high levels of trust (Jourard 1964; Pearce and Sharp 1973; Steward 1973; Frost and Wilmot 1978). It is not a great cognitive leap to reason that mutually enhancing, reciprocal self-disclosure can be a catalyst for greater intimacy within a relationship. Furthermore, due to the reciprocal nature of self-disclosure, it can be further reasoned that a degree of relational collaboration between the parties would begin to emerge as a result of the parties feelings of increased "investment" in the relationship (Thibaut and Kelly 1959). It is also important to remember that self-disclosure is voluntary. As Pearce and Sharp define it (p. 414, 1973).

> ...it excludes confessions, or communication behavior in which personal information is elicited from a person by force, threats or use of drugs, and from revealing behavior, consisting of unintentional cues (e.g., "Freudian slips" or nonverbal mannerisms) which express something about the person.

Clearly, the intention to manipulate without regard for or analyze one's partner is not a function of relationally enhancing self-disclosure (Beach & Wilmot 1975). Instead, self-disclosure is viewed as a dynamic, transactional process within an intimate, dyadic relationship (Jourard 1964; Wenburg and Wilmot 1973; Pearce, Sharp, Wright and Slamma 1974; Wilmot 1979).

To maximize the effects of self-disclosure within a relationship, self-disclosure must be a patterned feature of

the communicative transactions between dyadic partners. Self-disclosure involves both parties and must, by the author's definition, be reciprocal and mutually concensual. Interdependence between relational partners is highlighted through self-disclosure. Furthermore, cognitive awareness and acceptance of the interdependence within a dyad can lead to more collaborative and less competitive means to achieve individual satisfaction within the relationship (Apfelbaum 1974).

Several theorists and researchers have considered the appropriateness of self-disclosure in given relational contexts (Luft 1969; Powell 1969; Cozby 1972, 1973; Pearce and Sharp 1973; Wenburg and Wilmot 1973; Wilmot 1979; Chelune and Figueroa 1981; Bochner 1982; Cline 1982; Parks 1982). Several have pointed out varying degrees of differences between male and female self-disclosure (Cozby 1972, 1973; Pearce and Sharp 1973; Pearce, Sharp, Wright and Slama 1974; Rosenfeld 1979; Bochner 1982; Cline 1982; Parks 1982; Tardy and Hosman 1982). One thing seems clear: appropriateness (as a second order construct) of self-disclosure is matter of importance and concern to both parties in an ongoing, cohesive relationship.

The phrase "high level" of disclosure needs some qualification as well. The semantically balancing word of "appropriate" may not be enough. As several authors and reseachers have pointed out, high levels of self-disclosure

should not be confused with indiscriminate self-disclosure which seems to have an inverse effect on relational cohesion and intimacy (Altman and Taylor 1973; Beach and Wilmot 1975; Rosenfeld 1979; Parks 1982). It is useful to outline relational rules for self-disclosure that are specific enough to lend guidance, yet not so structured as to be considered impractical or dogmatic.

Luft (1969) suggests appropriate self-disclosure is reciprocal in order to aid development of interdependency between dyadic partners. In addition, Luft posits that when self-disclosure is timed to fit what is happening between interactants in the present, when self-disclosure creates a reasonable risk, and when crisis situations occur--are all appropriate situations for self-disclosure within relationships.

Implicit in Luft's prescription for functional disclosure is the element of mutual acceptance. No more common fear resides within us than the fear of rejection (in varying degrees). Reciprocity of self-disclosure within dyads would likely neutralize their fear and at the same time make them keenly aware of the interdependence they share within their relationship. Confidence in one's ability to excel at a task is generally contingent on the memory of past successes. Thus, acceptable self-disclosure would appear to have the elements of behavioral reinforcement within its domain.

The Role of Self-Disclosure On The Promotion of Functional Conflict

On a most fundamental level, ongoing self-disclosure helps people to know and understand the needs of their partners. As Sidney M. Jourard (1964) puts it.

> I don't want to belabor the point, but I think it is almost self-evident that you cannot love another person, that is, behave toward him so as to foster his happiness and growth, unless you know what he needs unless he tells you.
>
> You cannot collaborate with another person toward some common end unless you know him. How can you know him, and he you, unless you have engaged in enough mutual disclosure of self to be able to anticipate how he will react and what part he will play? (p. 7).

The role which ambiguity plays in potential conflict situations cannot be overemphasized.

Subjects have reported cognitive awareness of the reciprocal nature of self-disclosure and have reported self-disclosing in order to gain information of an intimate nature from their partners' (Chelune 1981; Rosenfeld & Kendrick 1982). There is also a positive relationship between approval and self-disclosing information (Doster & Slaywater 1972).

A reasonable question at this point might be how then can high-levels of self-disclosure be related to functional conflict? Fahs (1981) suggests that the act of self-disclosure can reduce hostilities or even impede them. People tend to regard positively and behave more

cooperatively toward those who demonstrate collaborative rather than cooperative behavior (Apfelbaum 1974). By adopting functional conflict strategies, relational couples avoid the relational pitfalls associated with dysfunctional conflict. As outlined earlier, dysfunctional conflict is marked by defensiveness, dissatisfaction and the transition of interdependent collaborative goals into self-serving competitive goals. Dysfunctional conflict is marred by an erosion of trust and relational interdependence. If mutual self-disclosure is a dynamic, transactive activity which both parties utilize and incorporate within their relationship, then the potential for dysfunctional conflict may be lessened. The assumption has not yet been supported by research.

Since collaboration is theoretically correlated with self-disclosure, both self-disclosure and collaboration may constitute relational rules within a dyad which engage in functional conflicts. If we accept Watzlawick's (1976) claim that relational rules regularize behavioral patterns of interaction, then we theoretically may expect relational partners who engage in functional conflict to continue to do so.

Further evidence is provided by Yelsma (1984) to suggest a correlation between functional conflict management and effective adjustment. Yelsma hypothesized marital dyads' functional management predispositions were

significantly related to their perceptions of their own dyadic adjustment. Yelsma defined "functional" conflicts as conflicts in which partners communicated in a win-win fashion as part of a shared active-strategic pattern of conflict behaviors. Conversely, dysfunctional conflict was conceptualized by Yelsma as being characterized by couples escalating their conflict tactics in ways by which later conflict issues become independent of the original conflict issues.

In addition to his primary hypothesis, Yelsma attempted to test the six constructs of conflict management outlined by the Communication Conflict Instrument (CCI) developed by Brown, Yelsma & Keller (1981). Two of the constructs in the CCI are general measures of interaction or behavioral tendencies: one construct is related to the range of feelings from positive and negative. The other construct examines the range of "task energy" from high to low. The remaining constructs concern relational values: respect for others, control needs, concern for one's community, and concern for one's personal self-uniqueness.

To measure dyads' adjustment, Yelsma used Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier 1976). The DAS is comprised of four non-weighted subscales which assess dyadic satisfaction, dyadic concensus, dyadic cohesion and affectional expressions. A total score of the DAS is supposed to measure relational partners' perceptions of

their dyadic adjustment in their intimate relationships.

The results of Yelsma's study supported his main hypothesis: marital adjustment of medial married individuals was significantly related to their functional conflict predisposition. However, a multiple regression and step-wise analysis of the predictive variables of the CCI indicated only three of the six predictor variables were found to be significant: range of feelings, self-uniqueness, and task energy. These three variables accounted for approximately 28% of the total variance. As Yelsma notes 72% of the variance needed to be accounted for.

The present study extends and expands Yelsma's study in several ways. First, self-disclosure is viewed in this study as a multidimensional rather than a unidimensional construct. Thus some dimensions are believed to have more predictive relationships to functional conflict than others. Second, the attributes which describe functional and dysfunctional conflict in the Functional Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale developed by the researcher for this study bear only a modest relationship to the attributes described by the CCI. Third, the present study concentrates on dyadic satisfaction rather than an overall adjustment index. Finally, the present study is also committed to the explication of the relationship of interpersonal solidarity with functional conflict management and marital satisfaction.

As suggested before, a reasonable conclusion based on a review of relevant literature suggests that functional conflict management is, in several areas, the antithesis of destructive conflict management. Thus the present study will provide a test of the following hypotheses:

H_1 There is a significant, positive correlation between interpersonal solidarity and functional conflict within marital dyads as determined by self-report measures.

H_2 There is a significant, positive relationship between functional conflict and relational satisfaction in dyads as determined by self-report measures.

H_3 There is a significant, positive correlation between functional conflict episodes and the intent, amount, postiveness, depth and honesty/accuracy of self-disclosure within marital dyads as reported in self-report measures.

Operational Definitions

Dyadic satisfaction will be operationally defined by items 16-23, 31 and 32 of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale by G. B. Spanier (1976). Interpersonal solidarity will be operationally defined by the twenty items on the Individualized Trust Scale developed by L. R. Wheeless (1978). Intent of self-disclosure will be operationally defined by Items 1-4 on the Revised Self-Disclosure Scales (RSDS) developed by Wheeless (1976); amount of self-disclosure will be operationally defined by items 5-11 on the RSDS; positiveness of self-disclosure will be

operationally defined by items 12-18 on the RSDS; depth of self-disclosure is operationally defined as items 19-23 in the RSDS; honesty of self-disclosure is operationally defined by items 24-30 on the RSDS. Functional and dysfunctional conflict are operationalized by relevant items on the Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale developed by the researcher.

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION

In order to test the validity of the proposed hypotheses, three self-report instruments (described more fully later in this chapter) were administered to a sample of forty married subjects. The self-report instruments were designed to measure a marital dyad's (1) relational satisfaction, (2) predispositions towards functional or dysfunctional conflict, (3) self-disclosure shared within the relationship and (4) interpersonal solidarity.

The discussion of the methodology employed in this research project will be presented in the following sequence: (1) subjects and subject selection; (2) descriptions of (a) the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier 1976), (b) the Revised Self-Disclosure Scale and Individualized Trust Scale developed by Wheeless (1978), and (c) the Functional - Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale developed by the researcher; (3) a discussion of the procedures to be used within this study.

Subjects and Subject Selection

The subject pool was drawn from two Western American cities of populations of approximately 35,000 and 600,000 inhabitants. The subjects for the study were

comprised of fifty-six married individuals. Since age or length of marriage were not initially considered as relevant variables within the parameters of this study, they did not affect the eligibility of potential subjects.

Solicitations for subjects were made by the researcher to students enrolled in Summer courses, 1984 offered by the Department of Communication, University of Utah and employees of a commercial diet center in Salt Lake City. It was expected only one partner of a given marital dyad would be currently enrolled in Communication classes.

Student members of marital dyads were asked by the researcher to confer with their mates to determine their partner's willingness to participate in this study. If a student's marital partner agreed to participate in the study the researcher provided a survey booklet to his/her relational partner as well. In either case, married individuals were instructed to complete their surveys without conferring with their mates. All respondents filled out their survey booklets at their convenience unsupervised by the researcher.

The subject pool was comprised of 30 females and 26 males. Their ages ranged from 19 to 49 years old with a median age of 25 years old. The subject's length of marriage ranged from four months to 33 years with a median of 2.5 years. Forty-four of the subjects reported they and their spouse either worked or attended school; two subjects

reported one household wage earner and no response was received by ten subjects on the number of household wage earners. The total household income ranged from up to $10,000 to over $50,000 with a median household income of up to $20,000. The religious preference of the subjects were as follows: 35 subjects reported themselves to be members of The Church of Latter-Day Saints; 9 subjects reported no religious preference; 5 subjects reported a preference for Protestantism; 4 reported a preference for Catholicism; 4 reported a preference for nondenominational Christianity and; one subject reported his religious preference as Lutheran.

MATERIALS

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was developed by G. B. Spanier to measure degrees of satisfaction among primary relationship couples (1976). The scale is included as Appendix 1. The 32 item questionnaire represents a condensation of 300 questions included on previous satisfaction instruments collected and itemized by Spanier.

The DAS not only measures dyadic satisfaction but three other relational dimensions related to satisfaction as well: dyadic concensus, dyadic cohesion and affectional expression. Of the four relational dimensions only the

relational satisfaction dimension was utilized in the present study. Relational satisfaction was posited in H_2.

Spanier utilized Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha to test the DAS for subscale as well as total test reliability. All subscales received sufficiently high reliability to justify their inclusion in the DAS. The total test reliability score was .96. The subscale reliability scores were as follows: dyadic satisfaction .94; dyadic concensus .90; dyadic cohesion .86 and; affectional expression .73. The highest reliability rating for a subscore was dyadic satisfaction.

Further evidence for the reliability was provided by Sharpley and Cross (1982). After administering the DAS to their subjects, Sharpley and Cross's post hoc analysis of their data proved remarkably close to Spanier's original results. Sharpley and Cross's mean score was 108.5 as compared to Spanier's mean of 101.5. Sharpley and Cross's overall reliability was .96 which was exactly the overall reliability score Spanier had achieved.

The items most relevant to this study are items 16-23 and items 31 and 32 which measure degrees of relational satisfaction. Of special interest is item 31 which is a six point continuum which requires respondents to rate their relational "happiness." It is argued here that "happiness" and "satisfaction" are strongly related semantically.

Wheeless and Grotz's Self-Disclosure Scale

In 1976 Wheeless and Grotz constructed a self-report questionnaire in an attempt to measure self-disclosure as a multidimensional construct. They developed their Individualized Trust Scale (ITS) scale with six potential dimensions of self-disclosure: (1) amount, (2) depth, (3) honesty-accuracy, (4) intent, (5) positive-negative factors and, (6) relevance to topic.

In their original scale, thirty-two Likert-type, topic free statements with seven interval, ordinal scaled responses were developed. These statements attempted to measure the six dimensions of self-disclosure.

Both orthogonal and oblique rotations were used in factor analyses to determine the factors present in each dimension. Each dimension was required to have at least two items loaded at .60 with no secondary loadings above .40. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations were used to assess the magnitude of relationships among the reported dimensions.

The orthogonal rotation produced five dimensions which accounted for 60% of the total variance with fifteen items meeting the factor loading requirements. The variance on each dimension accounted for by items loaded on each factor ranged from 83% to 91%. Factor reliabilities were .72, .61, .64, .74 and .62 respectively.

The oblique rotation produced six dimensions accounting for 60% of the total variance with 17 items meeting the

factor loading requirements. Variance on each factor accounted for by items loaded on each factor ranged from 80% to 91%. Factor reliabilities were .64, .74, .62, .64, .72 and .25 respectively.

In a subsequent study Wheeless (1976) expanded Wheeless and Grotz's earlier scale by increasing the items on his self-disclosure scale from 18 to 40 items developed on the basis of face validity for measuring the original five dimensions of self-disclosure. Wheeless then deleted the sixth dimension, the relevance-message nature factor, which had previously been judged to manifest only weak reliability. He named the new scale the Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS). The RSDS is included as Appendix 2.

In addition, Wheeless included a ten item, seven interval, Likert-type statement scale which he based on the content validity of attributes associated with solidarity. Three hypotheses were constructed to test the strength of the relationship between self-disclosure and solidarity.

Of the original ten items in the solidarity measure, nine items met the established eigenvalue criterion during factor analysis of 1.0. The unrotated factor matrix disclosed a single factor solution with primary loadings for the nine remaining items equaling or exceeding .69. The overall reliability for the final solidarity measure was .91.

Factor analysis of the expanded 26 item self-disclosure measure (these were items added to increase overall reliability) revealed a four-factor solution.

These four factors demonstrated increased reliabilities for the dimensions of self-disclosure: (1) intended disclosure (reliability = .67), (2) amount of disclosure (reliability = .84), (3) positiveness-negativeness (reliability = .87) and (4) honesty-accuracy of disclosure (reliability = .82).

Three hypotheses were confirmed by the study. Of special interest was H_2: "reported self-disclosure is higher in relationships perceived to be high in solidarity than in those perceived to be low." A second study (Wheeless and Grotz 1976) closely replicated the reliability findings of the previous study with one exception -- the addition of a "control of depth" factor (reliability = .79) which loaded appreciably higher in high solidarity groups than in low.

In a final study, Wheeless (1978) attempted to test the relationship between trust, solidarity and self-disclosure. Wheeless hypothesized that "a linear combination of self-disclosure variables and perceived trustworthiness of the individual is significantly related to interpersonal solidarity with the individual" (p. 149).

Wheeless administered his 31 item, Likert-type version

of his Revised Self-Disclosure Scale as well as the 15 item Individualized Trust Scale (RSDS: Wheeless, 1976) to 385 students with "close" and "distant" self-disclosure "targets" in mind. In addition to responding to the RSDS the subjects were asked to complete an expanded version of Wheeless's interpersonal solidarity scale. The twelve additional items were included on the basis of face validity to provide a fuller sampling of the attributes which were believed to constitute the concept of interpersonal solidarity. The expanded Individualized Trust Scale (ITS) is presented in Appendix 3.

Factor analysis of the Individualized Trust Scale produced an unrotated unidimensional solution. The 20 item measure had an overall reliability of .96. Of great interest were the findings of the additional items which referenced "closeness" (items 1, 15, 19). Eigenvectors and factor loadings for these items were highest of the items tested, thereby determining the vector associated with the construct. Also, items 3, 5, 7, 8 which were concerned with trust and disclosure were correlated highly enough with the solidarity construct to have loadings ranging from .63 to .79. Wheeless interpreted this result as an indication that trust and disclosure could be considered to be critical attributes of solidarity.

The overall reliabilities of the RSDS and ITS were

close to previously reported. A significant finding of the study was reported self-disclosure to another individual in terms of greater amount, depth and honesty was found to be positively related to the perceived trustworthiness of that individual. As Wheeless reports:

> The strength of the relationship between self-disclosure/trustworthiness and solidarity (53-58% shared variance) along with factor analytic results supported the following interpretation: self-disclosure and individualized trust appear to be meaningful both (1) as critical attributes of solidarity, and (2) as communication-related phenomena which validly indicate varying degrees of perceived solidarity within relationships. Individualized trust as well as self-disclosure depth or intimacy, greater total amount, honest, and conscious awareness or intent to disclose reflect much of the solidarity of the interpersonal relationship [p. 155].

Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale

The Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale (FDCAS) was developed by the present researcher in response to his desire to measure the attributes relational dyads associated with their general relational conflict styles. The conceptual categorization and the relationship of self-disclosure to relational conflict styles was first hypothesized by Pioli (1983).

The FDCAS is a 68 item, five point Likert-type scale designed for dyads to respond to specific statements about their conflicts in general. (See Appendix 4 for FDCAS). Their responses are loaded according to whether the question reflects a functional or dysfunctional conflict attribute.

The claim for consensual validity was based on the process employed for item generation. The researcher interviewed three hetrosexual marital dyads who had been married for two months, two years and four years respectively. The entire interview was tape recorded.

The interviewer asked two open-ended questions. At the beginning of the interview, the subjects were asked "What makes 'good' conflicts or 'bad' conflicts for you?" About forty-minutes into the interview the second question was asked, "Have you found some things work better than others when you conflict?" The length of the interview was approximately 65 minutes. An initial transcript was drafted of the subject responses verbatim. The responses were then reworded by the researcher to insure semantic clarity.

Internal consistency of the FDCAS was appraised on the basis of subject responses within this study. Correlations were made on an item basis between total summed scores for each item and the overall instrument summed score. Elimination of items were contingent on their failure to attain significant scores in relation to highly significant items.

PROCEDURES

The data was gathered by the researcher. He solicited married volunteers from lower-level undergraduate classes and local organizations. After a list of the

volunteers was completed the researcher requested the subjects to allow enough time in their everyday schedules to complete the questionnaires at their earliest convenience within the privacy of their home undisturbed by their mate. The researcher met with the subjects to briefly explain he was interested in discovering how conflict was related to their everyday married life.

The researcher then presented a booklet to each subject which was comprised of the four previously mentioned scales with general overall instructions and specific instructions preceding each individual scale. The individual scale instructions were the instructions the original author's first dictated (see appendix 1-4 for scales and individual scale instructions) with the exception of the FDCAS.

The general instructions were placed on a separate page preceding the research scales. They read as follows:

> Thank you for volunteering to participate in this research project. This survey is comprised of four questionnaires which requires you to respond to a series of communication questions. All your responses must be opinions you believe reflect the communication which exists within your marriage relationship. Some questions will be understandably more difficult to answer than others. Nevertheless, it is important you not confer with your mate while you are responding to the questions inside. You alone must answer the questions. Please respond to all questions.
>
> Remember - there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Please be as frank as possible in your responses. Respond to these questions at one sitting. There is no time limit other than this "one sitting" requirement.

Reminder--all your responses will be kept strictly confidential. No one, including the researcher, will be aware of your responses as they pertain to you. Nor will the researcher tell any persons you agreed to participate in this research project. Your right to privacy will be entirely respected.

Here is an example of the question/answer format used within this booklet: Most questions ask you to rate your degree of agreement on a 7 point continuum from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

EXAMPLE:	Strongly Agree		Mod. Agree			Strongly Disagree
1. It is important to brush your teeth after every meal	___	___	___	X	___	___	___

The imaginary respondent feels she moderately agrees with the statement so she indicates this by placing an "X" in the middle space provided for her response. Remember to mark the degree of your agreement disagreement as accurately as possible.

When you feel you understand these general instructions, please open the booklet and proceed. More specific instructions head each of the four questionnaires. When you have finished answering the survey questions, return the booklet to the researcher as soon as possible. Thank you for your time!

When all booklets were completed and the raw data collected, analysis of the data proceeded as follows.

First, correlations were made for the total scores for each item on the FDCAS. Low correlations indicated unimportant items. These items were discarded. Only the data from the strong items were used in the subequent analysis. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was then employed to measure the internal consistency of the FDCAS. This

provided the first test of the instrument's reliability.

Second, Spanier's DAS was scored to determine if the sample was satisfied with their relationships. The DAS was correlated with the FDCAS to calculate the relationship between marital satisfaction and functional/dysfunctional conflict styles of couples.

Third, the total score of the Individualized Trust Scale was correlated with the FDCAS to calculate the relationship between interpersonal solidarity and functional conflict within dyads.

Fourth, each of the five factors (dimensions) of Wheeless and Grotz's RSDS were correlated with the FDCAS. Using multiple regression the five subscores of the RSDS were regressed on to the FDCAS measure. The RSDS was considered the independent variable, while the FDCAS was treated as the dependent variable measure. A step-wise analysis of the RSDS determined which of the five dimensions best predicted conflict styles in couples.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The results of the statistical analysis of the data collected for this study are presented in this chapter. These results include (1) an item analysis of the Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale (FDCAS) and two subsequent measures of the reliability of the instrument; (2) a measure of the correlation between functional conflict, relational solidarity and marital satisfaction and, (3) the relationship between functional conflict styles and five dimensions of self-disclosure. The three hypotheses for this study sought to predict interrelationships which would exist among measures of functional conflict, interpersonal solidarity, relational satisfaction and self-disclosure. Results of subsidiary analysis are included later in this chapter.

Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale

An item analysis constituted the preliminary analysis of the FDCAS. Each item of the 68 scale items was correlated with the total score of the scale. Items which proved significant were retained for the scale and subsequent analysis. Items that did not achieve significance were discarded. Of the original 68 items on

the scale, 15 items were disgarded. Table 1 provides the item statistics for the FDCAS.

TABLE 1

Item Statistics For Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale

Item Number	Correlation With Total Score	p
1	.49	.000*
2	.48	.000*
3	.13	.172
4	.62	.000*
5	.17	.105
6	.38	.002*
7	.60	.000*
8	.43	.001*
9	.02	.448
10	.01	.457
11	.41	.001*
12	.44	.000*
13	.41	.001*
14	.55	.000*
15	.62	.000*
16	.43	.000*
17	.66	.000*
18	.54	.000*
19	.42	.001*
20	.37	.003*
21	.47	.000*
22	.57	.000*
23	.22	.051
24	.51	.000*
25	.46	.000*
26	.10	.233
27	.12	.187
28	.47	.000*
29	.31	.010*
30	-.13	.164

Item Number	Correlation With Total Score	p
31	.00	.498
32	.44	.000*
33	.37	.003*
34	.52	.000*
35	.09	.246
36	.29	.017*
37	.28	.018*
38	.40	.001*
39	.44	.000*
40	.03	.415
41	.52	.000*
42	.38	.002*
43	.43	.000*
44	.60	.000*
45	.37	.002*
46	.15	.135
47	.15	.132
48	.51	.000*
49	.35	.004*
50	.37	.003*
51	.65	.000*
52	.51	.000*
53	.59	.000*
54	.45	.000*
55	.12	.191
56	.49	.000*
57	.48	.000*
58	.32	.009*
59	.58	.000*
60	.43	.001*
61	.45	.000*
62	.59	.000*
63	.59	.000*
64	.63	.000*
65	.20	.075
66	.54	.000*
67	.39	.002*
68	.44	.000*

* Indicates item retained for final scale.

Therefore, the final FDCAS consisted of 53 items. The overall reliability of the FDCAS was .953 as measured by Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. Thus the scale is considered to be a reliable measure of functional and dysfunctional conflict within marital dyads. Tentative evidence to support the validity of the final FDCAS was provided by significant correlations with solidarity and dyadic satisfaction. This finding is reviewed in the following section.

Solidarity, Satisfaction and Functional Conflict

In the second stage of the analyses, total scores for the Individualized Trust Scale (solidarity) and the dyadic satisfaction portion of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale were correlated with the total scores of the FDCAS to determine the relationship of marital satisfaction and solidarity to functional conflict. The correlations were performed using Pearson Product Moment Correlations. The result of the analysis is provided in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Scale Correlations With Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale

Scale	Correlations With FDCAS	p
ITS (solidarity)	.501	.000
DAS (satisfaction quotient)	.607	.000

As can be seen from the results of Table 1, both the measures of interpersonal solidarity and marital satisfaction correlated positively with functional conflict. Thus, hypotheses one and two of this study were supported. Hypothesis one stated "there is a significant, positive correlation between solidarity and functional conflict within marital dyads as determined by self-report measures." Hypothesis two stated "there is a significant, positive relationship between functional conflict and relational satisfaction in dyads as determined by self-report measures."

Functional Conflict and Self-Disclosure

In order to determine the relationship between functional conflict and self-disclosure within marital dyads a stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed. All five factor subscores of self-disclosure within the RSDS were regressed on to the FDCAS measure. The FDCAS was treated as the dependent variable, while the five factors of the RSDS were treated as the independent variables.

The results of the analysis were not significant. As can be seen in Table 3, none of the five factors of self-disclosure significantly correlated with the total scores of the FDCAS. Although the "intent" factor approached significance, the total variance of all five factors of self-disclosure accounted for less than 10% of

the overall shared variance with the ratings of functional conflict. Table 3 illustrates the subscale scores after stepwise multiple regression onto the FDCAS.

TABLE 3

Stepwise Multiple Regression of Five Factors of Self-Disclosure Showing Relationship of Self-Disclosure With Functional Conflict

Factor	Multiple R	R^2	R^2 Change	Simple R	F
Intent	.221	.049	.049	.221	2.76NS
Amount	.303	.010	.007	.023	1.29NS
Positiveness	.270	.072	.024	-.107	2.07NS
Depth	.290	.084	.012	-.056	1.6 NS
Honesty/ Accuracy	.312	.097	.005	.113	1.08NS

The results did not support hypothesis three of this study. No relationship was found between intent, amount, positiveness, depth or honesty/accuracy of self-disclosure and functional conflict.

SUBSIDIARY FINDINGS

Subsidiary analyses included Pearson Product Moment Correlations between total FDCAS scores and length of marriage and age as well as intercorrelations with solidarity and marital satisfaction. In addition a one-way ANOVA was performed to determine if significant differences existed between male and female subjects and reported conflict styles.

Conflict, Length of Marriage, Age, Solidarity and Satisfaction

As previously mentioned, conflict was significantly related to solidarity (r=.501) and satisfaction (r=.61). However, functional conflict was negatively and significantly related to length of marriage (r=-.428) according to a Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Solidarity was also measured to be negatively correlated with length of marriage (r=-.372). Age was found to be negatively and significantly related to marital satisfaction (r=-.401).

As expected, marital satisfaction and interpersonal solidarity correlated highly (r=.729). This significant correlation provided not only another reliability index for the ITS and DAS but a positive intercorrelational relationship between the ITS, DAS, and FDCAS, adding to the initial validity of the FDCAS.

Sex Differences and Functional Conflict

A one way ANOVA was performed to determine if any significant differences existed between males and females and their reported conflicts in the FDCAS. It was theorized that males might report more competitive (and therefore dysfunctional) conflict styles than females. The result of the ANOVA indicated the difference between male and female conflict episodes were not significant ($F_{1,53}$ =1.091; NS). Males and females reported no significant differences in functional vs. dysfunctional conflicts.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

In this chapter a discussion of the results of the study is presented. Implications of these results and suggestions for future research are also proposed.

Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale

Perhaps the most significant accomplishment of this study was the development and initial testing of the Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale. As mentioned previously, the FDCAS is the first known instrument developed on the theoretical predication of measurable distinctions within marital conflict styles. After discarding non-significant items the revised form of the FDCAS was determined to be a reliable measuring instrument.

Another interesting finding of subsequent analyses of the FDCAS was the lack of difference in overall responses between males and females. That is, neither males or females reported their marital conflicts differently to any significant degree. This finding may lend support to two theoretical suppositions of this study. First, functional conflict episodes within well adjusted marital dyads result from active collaborations from both partners. Functional

conflict is strongly related to at least a tacit sense of interdependency and mutual accommodation between relational partners. Secondly, if sex related differences exist in individual conflict styles as a result of sex-related socialization within our culture, then marriage may contribute to a balancing or "rounding" of these differences in some way. However, the reseacher is not implying the institution of marriage has the linear effect of producing functional conflict.

Of the 15 items not found to be significantly strong to merit inclusion on the final form of the FDCAS, six items were indicative of conflict avoidance (items 3, 26, 27, 30, 47, 55). Of interest here is the naive subjects' rejection of the theoretical premise that avoidance of conflict is an attribute of dysfunctional conflict styles. In short, subjects did not report avoidance of conflict as detrimental to their relationships. The rejection of this postulate by the respondents in this study constitute an implicit challenge to the theoretical conceptualization of conflict avoidance as harmful to interpersonal relationships.

Varying explanations may account for the reported use of avoidance among subjects as a conflict tactic. One reason may be that respondents did not feel conflict was generally <u>desirable</u> within their relationships. As theoretically beneficial as conflict may be to a relationship, the popular notion likely persists that

conflict may be indicative of a more serious lack of compatibility between relational partners. Conflict also is not a pleasurable relational activity for most couples. Relational conflicts can be time-consuming and by using time normally allocated for other activities.

Furthermore our culture has clearly defined rules for the appropriate environment in which to conflict. Public conflict is generally considered undesirable. Public functions tend to discourage conflict expressions. Within more traditional marriages, conflicts between husbands and wives are rarely enacted in the presence of the family's children or select relatives.

Interpersonal Solidarity and Functional Conflict

The first hypothesis stated:

> There is a significant, positive correlation between interpersonal solidarity and functional conflict within marital dyads as determined by self-report measures.

This hypothesis was supported. The Individualized Trust Scale correlated significantly with the FDCAS. Several factors are believed to contribute to this positive correlation. Wheeless (1978) theorized that a close relationship existed between interpersonal solidarity and perceptions of individualized trustworthiness. He theorized an increase in perceived trustworthiness would encourage an increase in interpersonal solidarity and vice versa. Based

on the relevant literature, the most obvious interpretation of the correlation between solidarity and functional conflict has to do with an inherent factor within functional conflict styles. In a cyclic manner, functional conflict episodes reinforce productive behavioral patterns which strengthen relational interdependence. Higher mutual dependence is very likely to be closely related to high levels of interpersonal trust. Interpersonal trust within functional dyads continues to promote a functional conflict style within the relationship.

Another interpretation of the results emphasize the importance of collaboration. In this sense, functional conflict requires an interpersonal version of teamwork. Through collaboration, individuals learn to anticipate and act upon the needs and desires of their partner. Such collaborative teamwork in functional conflicts contribute to a sense of closeness through the coordination of effort. Wheeless (1978) established closeness as the criterial attribute loading the highest on his interpersonal solidarity scale. Although functional conflict styles probably do not have the linear effect of creating closeness within relationships, it can arguably enhance relational closeness with the same end result of a high level of solidarity. Conversely, a relationship with a high degree of solidarity might be expected to be more amenable to a collaborative conflict style. In short, whether or not a

direct causal link exists, a significant relationship can be tenuously said to exist between interpersonal solidarity and functional conflict management within dyads.

Relational Satisfaction and Functional Conflict

The second hypotheses stated:

> There is a significant, positive relationship between functional conflict and relational satisfaction in dyads as determined by self-report measures.

This hypothesis was also supported. Interestingly, the relational satisfaction indice of Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale (1976) correlated even more favorably with the FDCAS than did the ITS. Since only total scores of the ITS and DAS were compared to the FDCAS, the reason for a higher correlation is not readily apparent. However, the majority of the variance between the two scores may most likely be accounted for by their respective response demands. That is, couples who engage in functional conflict have slightly higher levels of relational satisfaction than interpersonal solidarity. However, a high .71 correlation was noted in the statistical analysis between satisfaction and solidarity. Thus, it can be suggested that satisfaction and solidarity are very similar constructs or are affected by similar manipulations.

Several explanations appear to adequately explain the relationship between satisfaction and functional conflict. Jourard (1959) posited a close relationship between

relational satisfaction and the reduction of relational ambiguity. It can be said that one affect of functional conflict can be to reduce uncertainty by the airing of issues previously only known to one relational partner.

Relational partners who successfully manage their conflicts have reported higher levels of marital adjustment and higher task energy as previously reported (Yelsma 1984). One can easily imagine a couple would be more highly motivated towards relational tasks with the confidence supplied by previous successful conflict engagements. Worry or anticipation of task failure would be lessened with the security of knowing one's relational partner would not engage him/her in a dysfunctional conflict as a consequence of his/her activity. Conversely, lower levels of satisfaction could be expected within relationships where wary partners become more covert in their activities to protect themselves from potential avenues of vulnerability.

Lastly, satisfaction can be enhanced within relationships as an end product or consequence of functional conflict management. Martin Buber suggested a committed relationship was like a "spiritual child" (Steward, 1977). As loving parents, relational partners nurture and care for their relationship. If the relationship, like the child, grows and prospers then the parents are proud and content. To extend Buber's metaphor, all marital dyads are parents of their own relationship. A strategy as useful as functional

conflict management could very well contribute to the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction a couple has in their "spiritual child."

Self-Disclosure and Functional Conflict

The third hypothesis stated:

> There is a significant, positive correlation between functional conflict episodes and intent, amount positiveness, depth and honesty/ accuracy of self-disclosure within marital dyads as reported in self-report measures.

This hypothesis was not supported. Several factors could have contributed to the nonsignificant correlation between the Revised Self-Disclosure Scales and the FDCAS. The first difficulty could be related to the instrument used to measure self-disclosure. Wheeless (1976) in commenting on the relatively low relationship between solidarity and self-disclosure posited the relationship between self-disclosure and trust to be more of a "state" rather than a "trait" phenomenon. That is, trustworthiness and self-disclosure are features of certain circumstances or relational events rather than features of an individual's personality. In line with this observation, self-disclosure, as measured in this study, could have reflected a trait orientation which would not have accounted for higher levels of self-disclosure expected within conflict episodes. The FDCAS did not allude to self-disclosure. And the RSDS does not specifically measure

self-disclosure during conflict episodes in any of its subscales. Therefore, the instruments may not have been sensitive to the combination of factors necessary to indicate self-disclosure within dyadic conflict styles.

Another possible reason for failure of the hypothesis may lie within the population tested. For example, it was discovered that 40% of the population tested reported marriages of three years or under in length. It could be that self-disclosure within marriages varies with the length of marital association. As measured within this study, a significant negative correlation was found between length of marriage, satisfaction, and solidarity. Self-disclosure might vary in degrees over time or over relational stages (as posited by Knapp 1978). Perhaps because of the relatively short association of marital partners in 40% of the population, other unidentified relational tasks take priority over conflict management and related self-disclosure.

For example, four of the rejected items on the FDCAS were specifically related to issues (content) within marriages. That is, the respondents felt that <u>issues</u> relating to right or wrong were at the crux of their conflicts rather than relational matters. The researcher assumed within this study that conflicts between relational partners always involved some question of relational cohesion. Yet it appeared that the majority of the subjects

in the sample did not see the connection between the issues involved in their conflict and their satisfaction with the marital relationship in general. In short, conflict and related conflict management strategies may not be a significant feature of the early phases of marriage.

Another factor which could have worked against the hypothesis concerns the conventional or conservative nature of the population. Of the total respondents, 58% reported membership in the Church of Latter-Day Saints (LDS). A well known feature of the LDS culture in Utah is their adherence to traditional roles for marital partners. The more conventional the couple the less need for self-disclosure. Their individualized relational roles are in a sense preordained. Of course, a benefit of living in accordance to clearly defined roles is the apparent lack of relational and role ambiguity. If this is the case, the need for self-disclosure is an incidental option rarely required by LDS marital dyads. Relational conflicts would tend to center on role expectations, with deviance from convention a primary issue, rather than relational ambiguity.

Relational power may constitute yet another reason for the failure of the hypothesis. As Beach and Wilmot (1975) discovered, self-disclosure may be used devisively by one person to elicit a reciprocal disclosure from their partner which their partner would not willingly provide under normal circumstances. Beach and Wilmot argue that the partner who

is manipulated into disclosing substantially more self-revealing information is the lower power member of the dyad. They also contend most people have at least a tacit awareness of this phenomenon and thus may avoid any more self-disclosure than they deem absolutely necessary.

Finally one must be prepared to accept the results of the data at face value and consider the results as they stand. Although the vast majority of communication scholars believe in the benefits of mutual self-disclosure within relationships, self-disclosure may not be considered an important factor within functional conflict. Communication scholars may also have erred in other deductions about self-disclosure.

For example, Guerney (1977) reported levels of self-disclosure were relatively low among couples seeking relational enhancement techniques. As couples progressed through therapy they reported higher levels of self-disclosure. Although intuitively and logically appealing, communication scholars may be erroneously advocating a linear relationship between functional relational hygiene and high levels of self-disclosure. A relationship may be present, but it may not be causal in nature. Conversly, the relationship between functional dyads and self-disclosure may be incidental rather than significant. Self-disclosure may be a variable within adjusted relationships but not a <u>mediating</u> variable.

And finally of course, self-disclosure may not be the discriminating factor between functional and dysfunctional conflict episodes.

IMPLICATIONS

The preliminary results of the FDCAS have helped to enrich our knowledge of the links between functional conflict, solidarity and satisfaction. However, more research needs to be undertaken to further develop the instrument. The internal consistency and reliability of the FDCAS can be enhanced by administering the instrument to a minimum of 530 subjects to allow for factor analysis of the items. Conflict avoidance items may be reworded and added to judge whether the items are validated by a different, larger subject pool.

In addition the entire study could be replicated to control for the subject factors previously mentioned and to expand the generality of the findings. In addition to a larger subject pool, demographic considerations could be more rigorously controlled. The ideal subject population would be comprised of individuals with greater degrees of variance within their culture, age, and length of marriage. A subject pool drawn from a different geographical region might be appropriate. In addition, the subject pool should be comprised of marriages who span a more exhaustive spectrum of marital adjustment. Allowances could be made to

include dysfunctional marital relationships.

In summation, although the preliminary results of this study are encouraging, further development of the FDCAS and replication of the study in a more varied environment would contribute substantially to the body of knowledge on this subject.

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APPENDIX A

RAW DATA

A-1 SUBJECT DEMOGRAPHICS AND SCALE SCORES

A-2 FUNCTIONAL-DYSFUNCTIONAL CONFLICT AFFECT SCALE

SUBJECT DEMOGRAPHICS AND SCALE SCORES

					RSDS						
S_S	S	LM	AGE	DAS	A	D	H	I	P	ITS	FDCAS*
00100	1	01	24	54	22	15	33	20	17	127	259
00200	1	01	22	51	31	14	27	22	24	118	202
00300	1	21	41	49	31	13	41	26	48	135	291
00400	2	21	39	45	31	25	37	22	41	120	207
00500	2	01	21	56	32	09	33	19	24	126	300
00600	1	01	23	57	19	10	40	25	30	127	286
00700	1	03	35	48	39	14	23	09	38	119	257
00800	2	20	39	49	27	14	37	22	24	122	244
00900	1	12	00	43	21	15	21	18	24	126	191
01000	2	27	49	23	21	07	29	19	36	048	113
01100	1	04	26	47	35	24	36	25	41	130	227
01200	2	03	26	48	26	08	37	22	34	129	307
01300	2	02	25	51	32	23	30	18	31	132	277
01400	1	02	27	43	33	20	27	22	31	106	230
01500	2	05	23	54	30	13	33	17	35	116	228
01600	1	05	25	52	34	13	29	14	30	112	208
01700	2	03	30	54	32	29	38	24	33	132	320
01800	2	06	32	53	21	14	37	20	41	139	279
01900	1	06	36	48	21	08	39	19	34	105	257
02000	1	01	23	47	43	20	35	27	32	126	261
02100	2	01	19	53	32	29	33	24	25	136	234
02200	1	03	27	57	21	11	38	23	29	121	286
02300	2	03	21	53	36	17	26	25	32	118	242
02400	6	33	54	28	16	07	36	23	44	044	166
02500	1	01	27	49	29	16	28	18	38	112	252
02600	2	01	24	52	36	23	25	17	18	122	230
02700	1	04	28	49	29	18	32	17	22	101	187
02800	2	04	22	50	40	13	31	19	38	110	218
02900	2	01	28	53	24	15	33	23	27	126	284
03000	1	01	23	48	32	15	55	25	35	103	246
03100	1	07	24	50	26	21	28	20	35	130	239
03200	2	04	24	52	34	09	30	22	27	118	235
03300	2	04	28	55	45	28	25	21	12	129	308
03400	1	18	39	51	30	07	38	22	36	124	204
03500	2	25	46	48	21	08	40	23	47	129	208
03600	2	18	38	42	40	25	31	20	23	119	187
03700	1	03	25	56	27	25	38	27	36	129	280
03800	2	03	24	47	33	20	36	23	33	109	213
03900	2	01	27	40	23	07	34	21	35	130	282
04000	1	20	41	54	22	21	34	24	34	121	271
04100	1	02	28	57	30	19	34	19	30	129	294
04200	1	20	43	47	35	21	30	20	37	121	221
04300	2	20	38	45	33	20	33	25	40	113	231
04400	2	02	30	52	20	17	31	23	30	116	255
04500	1	02	31	58	30	13	34	23	38	133	335
04600	2	09	28	60	37	12	35	26	42	132	305

					RSDS						
Ss	S	LM	AGE	DAS	A	D	H	I	P	ITS	FDCAS
04700	1	09	31	56	25	07	30	28	27	132	307
04800	2	03	25	54	32	21	35	22	25	132	303
04900	2	15	38	49	38	15	29	21	27	137	201
05000	1	12	35	56	34	31	35	24	36	140	281
05100	1	02	27	56	23	09	33	24	21	128	300
05200	2	12	32	55	31	30	42	23	35	139	073
05300	2	02	25	56	32	22	32	20	31	118	260
05400	1	15	38	56	29	21	35	22	30	138	330
05500	1	05	36	35	21	16	29	21	32	116	191
05600	2	06	28	41	34	24	28	26	36	120	225

Ss= Subject number

S= Sex of subject (Male=1, Female=2)

LM= Length of marriage

DAS= Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Relational Satisfaction)

RSDS= Revised Self-Disclosure Scale. Items below constitute scores of each subscale of the RSDS.

A= Amount of self-disclosure
D= Depth of self-disclosure
H= Honesty/Accuracy of self-disclosure
I= Intent of self-disclosure
P= Positiveness of self-disclosure

ITS= Individualized Trust Scale (Solidarity)

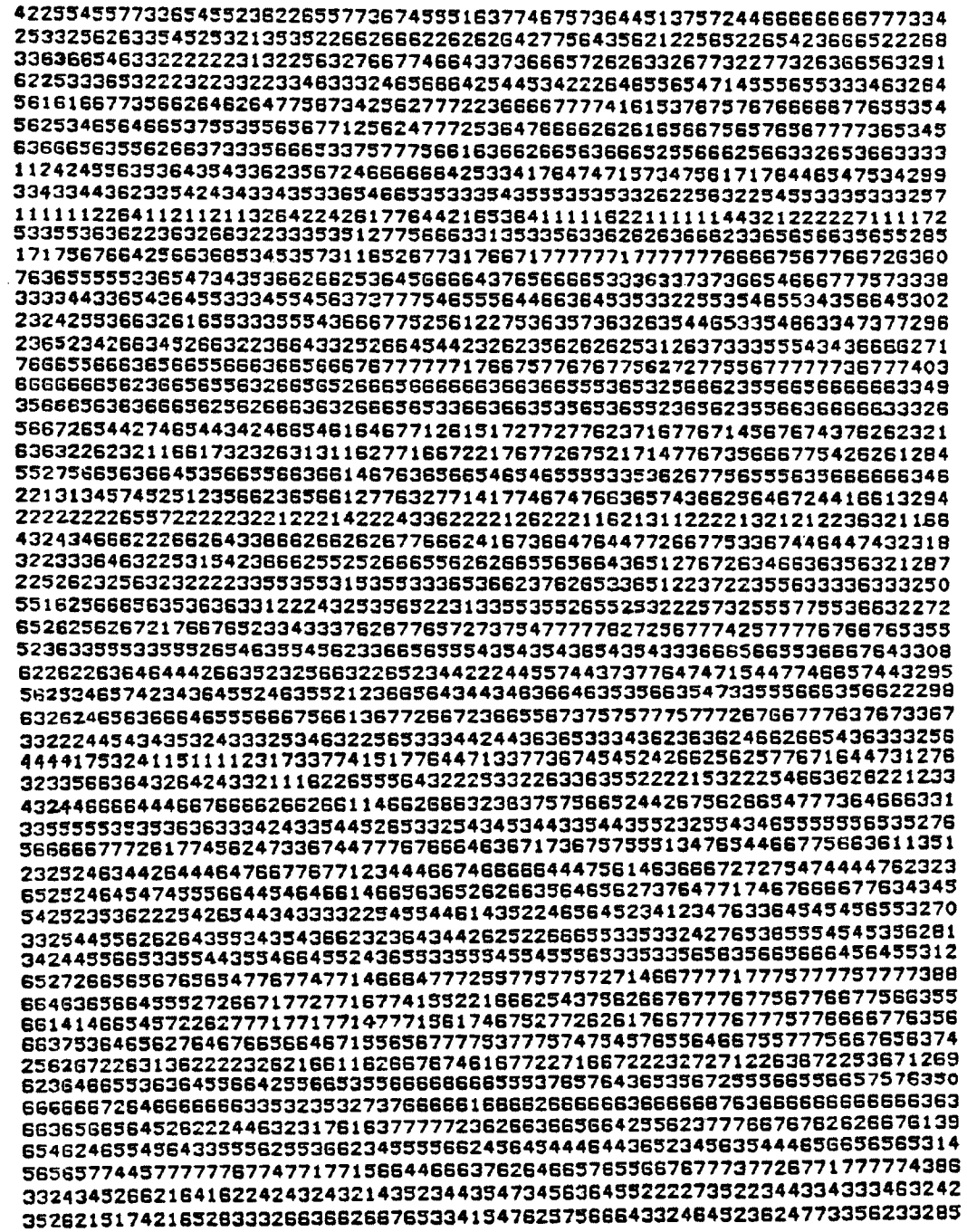
FDCAS= Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale

*All scale scores are represented as total scores.

The raw data for the item analysis of the original Functional-Dysfunctional Conflict Affect Scale is presented on the following page. Each horizontal line represents the coded responses of a single subject. Fifty-six subjects responded thus there are 56 horizontal lines.

Each vertical line has a series of numerals. Single numerals represent the coded response of a subject to an item on the FDCAS. The first item response begins on the far left of a data line and the remaining responses follow, in order, to the right. The last three numbers of each line represent the total score of the scale for the subject.

RAW DATA FOR FDCAS



APPENDIX B

B-1 DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE

B-2 REVISED SELF-DISCLOSURE SCALE

B-3 INDIVIDUALIZED TRUST SCALE

B-4 FUNCTIONAL-DYSFUNCTIONAL CONFLICT AFFECT SCALE

APPENDIX B-1

Instructions

In this scale you are asked to consider your relationship with your mate and then respond by placing an "x" in the appropriate space to indicate your degree of agreement/disagreement with each of the following issues in your marriage.

	Agree						Disagree
1. Handling family finances	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. Matters of recreation	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. Religious matters	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. Demonstration of affection	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5. Friends	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
6. Sex relations	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
7. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
8. Philosophy of life	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
10. Aims, goals and things believed important	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
11. Amount of time spent together	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
12. Making major decisions	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
13. Household tasks	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
14. Leisure time interests and activities	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
15. Career decisions	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

		All the Time						Never
16.	How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation or terminating your relationship?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
17.	How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
18.	In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
19.	Do you confide in your mate?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
20.	Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
21.	How often do you and your partner quarrel?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
22.	How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
		Every Day						Never
23.	Do you kiss your mate?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
24.	Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

		Never						More Often
25.	Have a stimulating exchange of ideas?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
26.	Laugh together?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
27.	Calmly discuss something?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

28. Work together on a project? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

These are things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks (check yes or no).

	Yes	No	
29.	____	____	Being too tired for sex.
30.	____	____	Not showing love

31. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point "happy" represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

. . . .

Ext. Unhappy | Fairly Unhappy | A Little Unhappy | Happy | Very Happy | Ext. Happy | Perfect

32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? Check only one response.

____ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.

____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed and will do all that I can to see that it does.

____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed and will do my fair share to see that it does.

____ It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I'm doing now to help it succeed.

____ It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.

____ My relationship can never succeed and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

APPENDIX B-2

Instructions

Please mark the following statements to reflect how you communicate with wife/husband. Indicate the degree to which the following statements reflect how you communicate with him/her by marking whether you strongly agree, agree; moderately agree; are undecided; moderately disagree; disagree; strongly disagree. Record your response in the space provided. Work quickly and just record your first impressions.

	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
1. When I wish, my self-disclosures are always accurate reflections of who I really am.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. When I express my personal feelings, I am always aware of what I am doing and saying.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. When I reveal my feelings about myself, I consciously intend to do so.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. When I am self-disclosing, I am consciously aware of what I am revealing.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5. I do not often talk about myself.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
6. My statements of my feelings are usually brief.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
7. I usually talk about myself for fairly long periods at a time.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
8. My conversation lasts the least time when I am discussing myself.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
9. I often talk about myself.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
10. I often discuss my feelings about myself.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
11. Only infrequently do I express my personal beliefs and opinions.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
12. I usually disclose positive things about myself.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
13. On the whole, my disclosures about myself are more negative than positive.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
14. I normally reveal "bad" feelings I have about myself.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
15. I normally express my "good" feelings about myself.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
16. I often reveal more undesirable things about myself than desirable things.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
17. I usually disclose negative things about myself.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
18. On the whole, my disclosure about myself are more positive than negative.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
19. I intimately disclose who I really am, openly and fully in my conversation.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
20. Once I got started, my self-disclosures last a long time.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
21. I often disclose intimate, personal things about myself without hesitation.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
22. I feel that I sometimes do not control my self-disclosure of personal or intimate things I tell about myself.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
23. Once I get started, I intimately and fully reveal myself in my self-disclosures.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
24. I cannot reveal myself when I want to because I do not know myself thoroughly enough.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
25. I am often not confident that my expressions of my own feelings, emotions, and experiences are true reflections of myself.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
26. I always feel completely sincere when I reveal my own feelings and experiences.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
27. My self-disclosures are completely accurate reflections of who I really am.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
28. I am not always honest in my self-disclosure.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
29. My statements about my own feelings, emotions, and experiences are always accurate self-perceptions.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
30. I am always honest in my self-disclosures.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
31. I do not always feel completely sincere when I reveal my own feelings, emotions, behaviors or experiences.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

APPENDIX B-3

Instructions

In this scale you are asked to consider your husband/wife and mark the following scale to indicate whether you, strongly agree; agree; moderately agree; are undecided; moderately disagree; disagree; or strongly disagree with each statement.

		Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
1.	We are very close to each other.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2.	This person has a great deal of influence over my behavior.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3.	I trust this person completely.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4.	We feel very differently about most things.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5.	I willingly disclose a great deal of positive and negative things about myself, honestly and fully (in depth) to this person.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
6.	We do <u>not</u> really understand each other.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
7.	This person willingly discloses a great deal of positive and negative things about himself honestly and fully (in depth) to me.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
8.	I distrust this person.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
9. I like this person much more than most people I know.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
10. I seldom interact - communicate with this person.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
11. I love this person.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
12. I understand this person and who he/she really is.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
13. I dislike this person.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
14. I interact - communicate with this person much more than with most people I know.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
15. We are not very close at all.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
16. We share a lot in common.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
17. We do a lot of helpful things for each other.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
18. I have little in common with this person.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
19. I feel very close to this person.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
20. We share some private ways of communicating with each other.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

APPENDIX B-4

Instructions

Take a moment and reflect on the episodes where you and your marriage partner have conflicted. A working definition of conflict for the purposes of this study would include arguments, debates, heated discussions, spats, disagreements, fights, squabbles and the like. Think about the general varieties of your conflicts with each other. Then read the statements below and respond to them. Indicate the degree to which the following statements reflect how you communicate or feel generally in a conflict situation by marking whether you, strongly disagree; agree; moderately agree; are undecided; moderately disagree; disagree; strongly disagree. Record your response in the space provided. Make a response for each question please.

		Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
1.	One or both of us feel the issues haven't been resolved after our conflict.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2.	The problems are not clear to at least one of us during our argument.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3.	One or both of us try to avoid disagreements.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4.	We are not satisfied with the outcome of our conflicts.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5.	One or both of us don't feel we accomplish much when we argue.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
6.	We feel we understand each others emotions when we argue.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
7. Something is settled after we have conflict.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
8. The issues in our arguments will not resurface in the near future.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
9. Most of our conflicts are not about right or wrong but misunderstandings between us.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
10. There is usually a more correct side in our disagreements.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
11. One or both of us are frequently angry or sad after our conflicts are over.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
12. One conflict seems to develop over the same issue.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
13. Our conflicts help us learn important things about our relationship.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
14. We feel we've done something important for each other after our conflicts.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
15. One or both of us think "here we go again" when we argue.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
16. We feel we've gotten through something difficult together after our disagreements.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
17. Our issues are settled when our conflict is over.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
18. One of us often thinks the other has a problem, but doesn't know for sure if he/she really does.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
19. One or both partners can remember the issues in an argument and will bring them up at a later time.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
20. We know we differ on important topics, but our differences don't matter to us.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
21. We tend to start arguing about one thing and wind up arguing about completely different things before we are through.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
22. One or both of us brought issues into our conflict which were not related to the topic.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
23. We have some points we disagree on frequently, but we don't mind.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
24. Our conflicts lead to more conflicts.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
25. One or both of us freq-ently brings up old issues into our present conflicts.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
26. When we go to bed angry we fight the next day.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
27. We are better off when we avoid arguing altogether.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
28. One or both of us usually denies feeling angry when they really are angry.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

		Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
29.	Our conflicts are best put off indefinitely.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
30.	Our misunderstandings get worse when we deny we have a problem.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
31.	We actually enjoy some benefits when we argue.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
32.	One of us consistently feels he or she loses our arguments.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
33.	One of us usually wins our arguments more than the other.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
34.	One of us typically tries to win "one-way-or-another" during our fights.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
35.	When one of us wins an argument, both of us lose.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
36.	Our conflicts lead to more respect for each other.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
37.	After our conflicts one of us frequently feels she/he was wrong.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
38.	After a conflict, one or both of us frequently feels "conned."	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
39.	One of us usually "gives in" to the other in order to end a disagreement.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
40.	Often we discover we were arguing for the same point after our conflict.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
41.	Our mate respects our point-of-view when we argue.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

		Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
42.	One or both of us only argues if they think they can win.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
43.	When we argue we feel our partner's issues are clearly stated.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
44.	We rarely doubt our partner's honesty when she/he argues with us.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
45.	The reasons for our arguments are clear to both of us.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
46.	After a conflict we know who won and who lost.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
47.	If we can avoid a conflict, we avoid it.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
48.	After we fight we feel affectionate towards one another.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
49.	One or both of us often feels physical discomfort after we argue.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
50.	We have never gone to bed angry with each other.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
51.	One or both of us suspect there are unspoken issues behind our fights.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
52.	Sometimes we fight to get our partner to talk to us.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
53.	We support each other emotionally even when we are angry.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
54.	We deal with our problems between us and don't take our issues to our family or friends.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

		Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
55.	If the time isn't right, we set a time for later when we can argue.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
56.	Often old issues come back to haunt us during our conflicts.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
57.	One or both of us argue even after we realize we were mistaken.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
58.	Both of us realize there are other sides to our issues.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
59.	We feel closer to each other after our conflicts.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
60.	"What the other person doesn't know won't hurt them" is a way we avoid conflicts.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
61.	One of us suspects the other isn't telling us everything they know.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
62.	Our "resolve" to our conflict is often shortlived.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
63.	One or both of us doesn't feel we've settled anything after our fight.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
64.	When we argue one or both of us feel we have lost control of the situation.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
65.	When we fight anything can happen.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
66.	One of us often feels his/her mate is not dealing seriously with their problem.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
67.	One of us acts aloof when we argue.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

68. One or both of us is sarcastic when we fight. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

Please respond to the following questions.

1. Sex (M or F) ____

2. Length of current marriage

3. Age _____

4. Religious Preference _____

5. Number of children living at home _____

6. Do both spouses work or attend school? (Yes/no) ____

7. Approximate gross income of household (check one)

up to $10,000 ____

up to $20,000 ____

up to $30,000 ____

up to $40,000 ____

up to $50,000 ____

Over $50,000 ____

Thank you for your assistance!